



CLASS 1

Cooperatives Meet People's Needs

MATERIALS NEEDED

Student Activity Handouts

CLASSROOM NARRATIVE

WARM UP: Cooperatives are businesses owned by groups of people and designed to meet their needs. They help us do things we can't do by ourselves.

If we need housing and can't afford to buy our own home, we can own an apartment building cooperatively with other families. If we need a job and can't find someone to give us one, or we don't want to start a business on our own, we can own a business with other people. If we are farmers and need a business to help us market and process the food we produce, we can join a farmer-owned cooperative to buy equipment or build a processing facility together.

ACTIVITY: Invite members from a local worker-owned co-op, a farmer-owned co-op or a consumer-owned co-op (food co-op, housing co-op, credit union, or electric co-op) to come visit your school. Ask the co-op representative questions about why they started their co-op. What problems did it address? What kinds of goals are the members accomplishing together that they couldn't if they worked alone?

NAME:

DATE:

Cooperatives Meet People's Needs, 1

Interview a member of a local cooperative. Ask them these questions and write down what they say.

What is your name?

What is the name of your cooperative?

How long have you been a member?

Why did you join?

Who owns this cooperative?

Why is your cooperative structured as a cooperative rather than a conventional business?

What benefits do you get from being a member?

What are some challenges you face because you're structured as a cooperative?

How are profits shared?

NAME:

DATE:

Cooperatives Meet People's Needs, 1

Do you belong to or work with other cooperatives? Why?

How do you market your product or service?

How does your co-op interact with or give back to the community?

NAME:

DATE:

Cooperatives Meet People's Needs, 2

A cooperative is an organization of individuals who share and work together for a common purpose. The members of a cooperative control the organization democratically. Farmers, workers, and shoppers may all form cooperatives to benefit the members by working toward a goal as an organized group of individuals.

List the cooperatives in your community, who their members are, and what they do for their members. Record your information about cooperatives in this grid.

Co-op Name	Type	Owners	Member Benefits

Explain which co-op on the list you might like to join and why.

Check off any of these other kinds of cooperatives that you think would help meet the needs of people in your community:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food co-op (helps you get food from local farmers and producers) | <input type="checkbox"/> Worker co-op (helps you get a job where you're one of the bosses) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing co-op (helps you get a good place to live) | <input type="checkbox"/> Farmer co-op (helps farmers buy seeds and equipment less expensively and sell their crop or a better price) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day care co-op (helps parents get good day care for their children) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy co-op (helps you get affordable energy) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Credit union (helps you get loans to buy a home, car, or other things you need) | |

